

Good morning. My name is Robert Bradford, president of the North Shore Chamber of Commerce.

Our chamber of commerce is the largest and most influential business organization North of Boston. In addition to promoting economic growth and an improved quality of life for the region we also are the business community's voice on major legislative issues.

I am here today to tell you that we believe in Verizon's petition before the Department of Telecommunications and Energy. The proposal currently before the DTE would provide for a shorter and more predictable time frame for competitors to obtain cable franchises in Massachusetts. This is the right approach for speeding up the introduction of cable competition in the Commonwealth. This filing is a limited step that only changes the time frame for municipalities to act on competitive franchises.

Expediting the licensing process is good for consumers. Simply put it provides them with a great choice for cable television services. It's good for pricing as well. In the North Shore Chamber territory, 10 of our communities have been granted franchises to Verizon. They are Burlington, Lynnfield, Ipswich, North Reading, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield, Wenham and Woburn. In these communities, residents now have a real choice for cable TV, and are seeing lower cable prices as a result of competition.

Approval of this proposal by the DTE also would give Verizon added incentive to grow its all-fiber to the home network in this state. This is good not only for consumers but for the Massachusetts economy. An economic study by the Internet Innovation Alliance conservatively estimates that 2,900 new high-tech jobs would result from increased cable competition in Massachusetts. That's the kind of economic development all of our members can support.

I respectfully ask you to say yes to Verizon's petition CTV 06-01. I thank you for the opportunity to speak today.